JOAN B. WILLIAMSON

THE «CHANSON DE GUILLAUME»: WHY WARRIORS WAGE WAR

In studying the origins of courtliness, C. Steven Jaeger has presented the view that western literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D. was the expression of a movement whereby medieval poets tried to tame their warrior patrons [1]. This is in essence what several critics have seen as happening to the heroes in the medieval French epics. As early as 1951, Richmond Lattimore saw the civilizing effect of Christianity when, in the preface to his translation of the *Iliad*, he remarked that Achilles lacked the chivalry of Roland, Lancelot or Beowulf (sic), because theirs was a chivalry colored by Christian humility [2]. In 1969 Georges Dumézil analysed the early Indo-European ideology that would survive in the form of common myths and defined the central motif of this ideology as a harmonious collaboration of sovereignty, fecundity and force providing the basis for society [3]. Elsewhere he fully developed this theory that the warrior, the hero, must function in conjunction with the other elements of a society for the well-being of that group [4]. Thus Dumézil has provided the

1. *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).
2. *The Iliad of Homer*, tr. with an introduction by Richmond Lattimore (Chicago-London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951; rpt. 1976), p. 48.
3. *Heur et malheur du guerrier: aspects mythiques de la fonction guerrière chez les Indo-Européens* (Paris: Presses Univ. de France, 1969).
4. *Mythe et épopée:* II, *Types épiques indo-européens, un héros, un sorcier, un roi*, Bibliothèque Sciences Humaines, NRF (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

historical basis for the taming of force by the collaboration with and subordination to other elements of society by those who wielded this force, i.e. the warriors.

In 1978 Jean Batany pointed out that the passage from use of the term "miles" to that of "bellator", the "chevalier", marked a collective exercise of what he called "la bonne violence", by which he meant a good use of force [5]. It shows the change from the individualism of the despot to the collectivity of the social class of heroes. This group exploited the model of the "bellator", through which the prelates of the eleventh century achieved a certain control of violence [6]. Bernard Huppé, in 1975, considered the Christianization of the medieval hero to be complete: "There can be but one Christian hero, and that is Christ. Whatever is heroic is an imitation of him — the true hero is an imitation of Christ as were the saints" [7]. More recently, Micheline Combarieu du Gres has written extensively and convincingly on the taming in the medieval French epic of the instinct for violence [8]. Succinctly stated, violence and agression *(fortitudo)*, instincts inherent in fallen human nature which tend naturally to serve the self, are brought under control by wisdom *(sapientia)* and are then radically transformed by charity *(pietas)*. Thus the epic hero is in a constant march along a spiritual itinerary — from the affirmation of strength for his own benefit to the use of it for others [9]. The aim of the true hero is, as Combarieu claims using the words of the anonymous author of *Girart de Roussillon*, "servir les autres et non plus soi" [10].

These arguments are sound and well-supported. However, not all epics conform entirely to this pattern. In the *Chanson de Guillaume* one episode concerning one of the protagonists falls outside the theories of these scholars. The figure of Rainouart presents undertones

5. *Du "bellator" au "chevalier" dans le schéma des "trois ordres" (Étude sémantique)*, "Actes du 101e Congrès national des Sociétés Savantes (Lille, 1976). Section de philologie et histoire jusqu'à 1610" (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1978), p. 32.

6. Batany, p. 34.

7. *The Concept of the Hero in the Early Middle Ages*. Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: papers of the fourth and fifth annual conferences of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2-3 May 1970, 1-2 May 1971. Eds. Norman T. Burns and Christopher J. Reagan (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975), p. 23.

8. *L'idéal humain et l'expérience morale chez les héros des chansons de geste — des origines à 1250* (Aix-en-Provence: Univ. de Provence, 1979).

9. Combarieu, 6, pp. 781-87.

10. Combarieu, p. 787.

which belie the universality of these constructs. The *Chanson de Guillaume* narrates the struggle of the Franks, led first by Vivien then by Guillaume, to repel the invading Saracens. Vengeance of Vivien is not the motivating factor behind Guillaume's expeditions for, as Wathelet-Willem has pointed out, once Vivien is buried, Guillaume passes on to other matters; and it is to protect the imperiled Guiburc left alone at Orange that Guillaume seeks Louis's aid: "Sole est Guiburc en Orenge le sié, / Par Deu vus mande que socurs li faciez!" (vv. 2528-29) [11]. But Louis demurs and it is Rainouart who steps in to become, in Combarieu's terms, the artisan of Guillaume's victory over the Saracens [12].

But this assistance does not come without a price. As I have shown elsewhere, Rainouart is violent and kills several of Guillaume's household and army [13]. Although the poet considered them expendable since he classified them as good-for-nothings and as cowards (eg. "lecheür", vv. 2700, 2704, 2881, and "couarz", vv. 2787, 2954), such conduct is significant. Critics have noted this behavior, of course, Combarieu calling Rainouart a "fracassante présence", and Paul Bancourt seeing in his appearance and behavior a resemblance to the Saracen giants of the epics [14]. However, they have ignored his last outburst which occurs when he is left out of the dinner celebrating the Franks' victory at the Larchamp, which they owed to him (vv. 3354-73). Both Combarieu and Bancourt pass over without comment the insult to him and his reaction to it [15]. Yet in this incident, Rainouart kills again and his choleric temperament has in no way abated. He will have nothing to do with Guillaume's courteously expressed offer to repair the slight done him. When Guinebald, angered at Rainouart's previous kitchen slaughter of his name-sake nephew, speaks forcefully, although making it clear that he will not attack him: "Si mei n'esteit pur ma dame

11. *Recherches sur la Chanson de Guillaume: Étude accompagnée d'une édition*, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, fasc. 210 (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1975), vol. 1, p. 357, n. 411. The citation is drawn, as are all the others of this text made in this article, from Jeanne Wathelet-Willem's edition contained in vol. 2 of *Recherches*.

12. Combarieu, p. 763.

13. *Le personnage de Rainouart dans "La Chanson de Guillaume". Guillaume et Willehalm: les épopées françaises et l'œuvre de Wolfram von Echenbach*, ed. Danielle Buschinger (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1985), pp. 165-66.

14. Combarieu, p. 771; Paul Bancourt, *Les Musulmans dans les chansons de geste du cycle du roi* (Aix-en-Provence: Univ. de Provence, 1982), p. 85.

15. Combarieu, p. 772; Bancourt, p. 85.

Guiburc, / Je vus ferreie de ma lance al polmun" (vv. 3430-31), the giant kills him with his old weapon, the "tinel" or a wooden beam, and with all his old ferocity: "Halce le fust, e desure li curt, / Si'l fiert el chief, altre si brait cum lou, / Li oil li volent, li cervels chiet desur" (vv. 3434-36). This our hero summarizes with marvellous understatement: "Receu avez pusteles!" (v. 3438). The poet calls Guinebald "felon" and presents him as imprudent therefore deserving perhaps of death, but the point is that we still have at the end of the poem the contentious Rainouart of old. While he claims indecision concerning the other Franks sent to him: "Ne sai des altres" (v. 3439), when these return to Guillaume they claim that Rainouart has killed one hundred of them (v. 3452). Was this to justify their unaccompanied return? Perhaps not, for as they fled the giant seized and threw down a great beam of a building, which crushed the head of whomever it hit: "Qui il consiut en sum le chief li croche" (v. 3444). This incident imposes limitations on the interpretation of the *Chanson de Guillaume* as the triumph of *pietas*.

This episode, to which we shall return later, acquires even greater consequence when we consider the importance of its protagonist, Rainouart, in the overall scheme of the epic. Rainouart is the main character of the second part of the poem and is the means of Guillaume's victory [16]. Further, as a pendent to Louis, he is built into the structure of the whole poem, including the first half from which he is physically absent [17]. While from one perspective Rainouart appears as something of a figure of fun, as the achiever of the greatest triumphs beyond the reach of others he is the hero of the poem.

Guillaume is presented as the hero of the poem in the sense of being the protagonist to whom the audience's attention is directed. (Although he only appears at v. 1000 in the 3554 verse poem, we have heard about him constantly prior to this appearance in Vivien's panegyrics) [18]. The poet, in his exordium, announces that the subject of his poem is Guillaume and his fight against Deramé whom he kills on the Larchamp:

16. Combarieu, p. 775.
17. Joan B. Williamson, *Structural Unity in the "Chanson de Guillaume": the Role of Rainouart*, "South Atlantic Review", 52, n° 2 (1987), pp. 14-24.
18. Combarieu, pp. 430-31.

Plaist vus oïr de granz e forz esturs
De Deramed, un rei Sarazinur.
Cum il prist guere vers nostre empereür?
Mais danz Guillelmes la prist vers lui forçur
Tant qu'il l'ocist en Larchamp par onur (vv. 1-5).

Guillaume acquits himself with honor on this battlefield and he enjoys a reputation as a mighty warrior. In the first episode, Vivien refers fifteen times to the succor that he hopes for in the person of his uncle. Further evidence of the Count's prowess is that Aïldré is unwilling to fight with Rainouart, considering that anyone less than Guillaume is an unworthy adversary (vv. 3282-85); and our giant can only engage him in combat by the ruse of pretending that Guillaume is dead (vv. 3286-87).

But we must deny to Guillaume the stature of unequivocal conquering hero throughout the poem. Let us note first of all that the poet is inaccurate in his narration of how Deramé died. Guillaume in effect defeats the pagan, cutting off a thigh, but he balks at killing a wounded man (vv. 1920-26). It is the young Gui who kills the pagan by beheading him (vv. 1963-64), explaining in response to Guillaume's protest that a maimed enemy is not truly defeated since he can withdraw to engender future foes (vv. 1969-74). Guillaume wins no victories without Rainouart, neither does he fight to the death as does Vivien who is heroic in truly Christ-like dimensions.

That Guillaume does not play the role of the hero in the poem is not because of his unwillingness to go to Vivien's defense when Girart solicits it at Barcelona, although such a stance strikes one at first glance as decidedly unheroic (vv. 933-1003). If Guillaume seeks to avoid more warfare it is because he is presented as a one hundred and fifty year-old man, already tired from previous battles (vv. 1015-38); and additionally the poet tells us he speaks thus to test Guiburc (vv. 1012-13). In any event we should not consider the exchanges between Guiburc and Guillaume as detrimental to the reputation of the Count since these two must be seen as a couple [19]. Combarieu points out that there is no separation of professional and private lives in the epic and that the wife is associated with the husband in his difficulties [20]. Guillaume and Guiburc are a couple, making one legal person with Guiburc in-

19. Combarieu, p. 414.
20. Combarieu, p. 8.

carnating the hero's strength: she is, as Combarieu puts it, "la force du héro" [21].

Guillaume is heroic; but it is Rainouart who is the hero of the poem in moral and psychological terms. Guillaume's reputation enhances Rainouart's stature as a hero since we see that the man he saves, who failed in two attemps to repel the Saracens and who would have failed in a third had it not been for our hero, is himself a mighty warrior. Since it is for so great a man that Rainouart must triumph where he failed, the giant must be perceived as being even greater.

Early in the final battle the other protagonists quickly recognize Rainouart's status. As he gradually reveals his supremacy, the Franks acknowledge it. When he says that he will smash the Saracen fleet to destroy the enemy's escape route, the Franks call him noble, "ber" (v. 3014). As he rescues the Franks from these ships they treat him with respect and call him "Bels sire" and again "ber" (v. 3109). Bertrant addresses Rainouart as knight before the fact, calling him "chevaliers sire" (v. 3028) in recognition of his worth. Guillaume, later cognizant of his prowess, promises to bestow on him lands, a wife and knighthood (vv. 3163-65). Finally, as the emir Balan attacks, the Franks grant to Rainouart the highest heroic status, recognizing that if he does not help them they are lost: "E Rainoarz al tinel u es tu? / Se or n'i viens, crestiëns sunt perdu! (vv. 3231-32).

The battle of the Larchamp has shown that Rainouart can endure hunger and thirst and face the fear of wounds and death. In this he is a traditional hero. However, with the Franks' admission that Rainouart is their sole chance of survival, he achieves the ultimate heroic status, that of the savior. And thus he is also the mythic hero. In ascribing to him this role, we give to this word the primary sense that it had in Indo-European of "protector" or "helper" [22]. For, as Bloomfield puts it, "the original hero in early literature was probably based on the king who died for his people, the warrior who defeated the tribe's enemies" [23]. Sellier also sees such traits in the mythic hero. So-

21. Combarieu, p. 430.

22. Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Problem of the Hero in the Later Medieval Period.* Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: papers of the fourth and fifth annual conferences of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2-3 May 1970, 1-2 May 1971. Eds. Norman T. Burns and Christopher J. Reagan (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975), p. 27.

23. Bloomfield, p. 30.

vereignty is a constant facet of this hero. He saves the world and his greatness has him either reclaim a kingdom or be given one [24]. While Rainouart does not become a king, he is the son of one and he acquires a fiefdom over which to rule.

Other elements of Rainouart's profile further identify him with the mythic hero. This hero, as described by Sellier, is born of illustrious parents, gods, or kings [25]. Threatened by death from which he is saved (usually by a simple person), this hero then leads an obscure life, which can be equated with an apparent death. This characterization accurately describes Rainouart's early years when he was plucked from the sea by merchants and sold by them to King Louis, in whose kitchens he spent his youth until the arrival at court of Guillaume. The period of occultation ends when the mythic hero is either recognized or revealed by his acts in a heroic epiphany, both of which events occur in Rainouart's case, for he is recognized as Deramé's son by Guiburc and as a noble warrior by the Franks beside whom he fights.

It is not surprising if we identify Rainouart as a mythic hero, for Baudouin, in his study of the myth of the hero and the epic, asserts that this myth is behind all epic heroes; not consciously present in the mind of the poet, but as a latent content of the poem underlying its manifest content [26]. Baudouin also points out that the hero's ability to perform great feats makes of him a savior, but that he also shares certain traits of the monsters which he overcomes [27]. A psychoanalytical interpretation of myth reveals that while tragedy insists on the complex of birth with the idea of sacrifice, as in *Oedipus*, epic concerns the myth of the hero's birth and a second birth, which involves not sacrifice but salvation and where the hero is not only saved himself but also saves others [28]. It is clear that in the poem under examination the foregoing fits not Guillaume but Rainouart.

If the second birth involves salvation, not only of the self but of others, it is clear that epic invention and the religious concept of salvation stand upon the same mythic substructure [29]. The role of Rainouart

24. Philippe Sellier, *Le mythe du héros ou le désir d'être dieu* (Paris: Bordas, 1970), p. 19.
25. Sellier, p. 17.
26. C. Baudouin, *Le triomphe du héros. Étude psychoanalytique sur le mythe du héros et les grandes épopées* (Paris: Plon, 1952), pp. 222-23.
27. Baudouin, p. 17.
28. Baudouin, pp. 228-29.
29. Baudouin, p. 231.

as the saving hand of God, which I have shown elsewhere, is based on this kind of mythic substructure [30]. Thus Rainouart in our poem is both epic and mythic hero.

However, Rainouart is not our usual epic hero. He knows nothing of chivalry, epitomized by his hatred of horses, as I have pointed out in the article to which I have just referred [31]. He is also an outsider to the Christian faith for which he fights. But these facts do not impinge on his status as hero. Combarieu has analysed such unusual protagonists and concludes that the use of heroes outside of but not hostile to chivalry permits simultaneous distance from and connivence with it [32]. The outsider allows the poet to define the pure ideal, as opposed to the form. Rainouart's "tinel", which at first glance seems to distance him from the traditional world of chivalry, is there not so much to stress his difference as to permit a distinction between being and seeming. Rainouart is there to recall what chivalry is — neither a title, nor the possession of certain weapons, but, beyond formalism, a way of life [33].

This way of life is social. Rainouart becomes the savior of the group and here we see elements of the process of civilization announced by the critics cited at the begining of this article. My point, however, is that our poem does not completely conform to this model, specifically in Rainouart's last violent episode. Nonetheless, the well-being of the group is of concern in the *Chanson de Guillaume*. Guillaume's fatigue and depression provide Guiburc with the opportunity to stress the need to put others ahead of oneself. The poet also signals Rainouart's orientation towards society at the end of the poem when he has him exclaim that he would have fought even harder on the Larchamp had he known he was related by marriage to Guillaume (vv. 3552-54). Thus we see sketched the themes of solidarity and the importance of the needs of the collectivity. However, the thrust of this article is that in Rainouart's case his own needs take primacy of place.

Where the needs of the collectivity are concerned, the actions of one man, dictated by self-interest, can destroy the whole group. Cowardice can be so described and as such is clearly a threat to the group.

30. *Le personnage*.
31. *Le personnage*, pp. 163-64.
32. Combarieu, pp. 750-76.
33. Combarieu, p. 772.

This effect of cowardice is true, of course, of all epics, of all poems of war and of all groups that wage war; and cowards were generally execrated. For example, the anonymous author of the *Poema de Fernán González* consigns cowards to hell to reside there in the company of Judas:

> "Todo aquel de vosotros que del campo saliere,
> o con miedo de muerte a presyon se les diere,
> quede por aleuoso qui tal fecho fyziere,
> con Judas en infyerno yaga quando moriere" [34].

Even so, cowardice is given prominent treatment in the *Chanson de Guillaume*. Indeed, as I have shown elsewhere, Rainouart owes his central position in the epic to the role he plays in the development of this theme as the counterpoint to the lack-lustre Louis [35]. There is a condemnation of cowardice in our poem which reveals a concern with the needs of the social group.

There is in the *Chanson de Guillaume* another layer of motivation more fundamental than the Christian ethos. Cowardice not only represents a threat to the group, but, recognizable as a moral flaw, concerns the protagonists as persons. It is treated on a personal level in our poem. Equation is made between cowardice and lechery, a most personal vice. We see this strikingly in the accusations Guillaume makes against Blanchefleur, when he accuses the Queen of adultery with cowards (vv. 2603-05); while Girart had earlier called the fleeing Estourmi a lecher "Ultre lecchiere, or pris as mortel huntel" (v. 423). Cowards are presented as having trembling bowels: "Car as couarz tremblout la bouele" (v. 2787). This image is early introduced in the poem when the fleeing Tiébaut, frightened at being brushed on the mouth by a hanging cadaver as he rushes past it, soils his horse blanket: "De la poür en ordead sa hulcel" (v. 346), which he then tries to give away as an act of generosity to the disgusted Girart (vv. 347-54). Further humiliation awaits Tiébaut in an unworthy trophy that he brings home. Deprived of his armor by the outraged Girart, he decides to escape hidden among a flock of sheep, in conscious or unconscious parody of Ulysses. One of the sheep gets caught on his stirrup. So fearful

34. *Poema de Fernán González*, ed. Alonso Zamora Vicente, Clásicos Castellanos, 129 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1946), Stanza 444.
35. *Structural Unity*, pp. 19-22.

is he that he rides on, turning the animal this way and that with the result that only its head is left when he reaches Bourges (vv. 395-402). Guillaume, accusing the Queen of consorting with Tiébaut, associates her with shame, as he does the King. Angered at Louis's refusal to join him in battle, Guillaume utters a curse: "Cinc cenz dehez qui chiet!" (v. 2532). The mention of bodily functions associates Louis with Tiébaut and thus infers that the king's refusal is due to cowardice. Such images indicate that cowardice is particularly treated as a personal matter.

Cowardice awakens a feeling of shame in the protagonists. When Tiébaut collides with the cadaver, he feels fear, but also shame, "vergoigne" (v. 345). Protagonists frequently express concern that they and their lineage not be vilified or shamed; and they consider themselves shamed for less shameful reasons than Tiébaut's. They consider themselves shamed if they do not fight valiantly so as to win. For example, Rainouart says he is shamed if he cannot strike better: "Or sui mal vergundez, / Si mielz n'i fiert perdu ai ma bunté" (vv. 3297-98). Failing to provide a family member with assistance is cause for shame, as Guillaume's relatives state when they offer to help him at the Larchamp (v. 2555 and v. 2587). One can be shamed by others, by the enemy if they defeat you (v. 2948) and by one's companions if they fight on your behalf but receive for themselves the glory, which was Tiébaut's initial reason for not wanting to summon Guillaume to the Larchamp (vv. 64-67). Shame, a concomitant of cowardice, is a matter of being defeated in battle. One is shamed by failing to perform in knightly fashion and one is also shamed if others accuse one of this, which we see when Vivien orders Girart not to dishonor Tiébaut by accusations of cowardice: "Par vostre langue ne seit prodom honiz!" (v. 464). Shame then is the consequence of not only what one does or does not do, but also of what others say of you. Avoidance of shame is of great import to the protagonists.

Cowardice is an important issue in this poem as is also its opposite concept, glory. There are frequent references to shame and the contrasting virtue, honor, concepts sometimes rendered by the words sharing a homophonic first syllable, "honiz" and "onur", but also by such terms as being blamed "blasmez" and being praised "alosé". Honor, like its contrary, shame, is tied to achievement in battle. The word

"onur" sometimes has a material aspect such as the feudal meaning of land owned, as for example when Gui ambiguously tells Guillaume he wants to prove his worth: "Si purrai bien mun hardement prover, / S'en mei ert salve l'honur e l'herité!" (vv. 1656-57). But mostly in the poem honor is a matter of reputation, of what others say of you, with the acquisition or bestowal of riches a concrete sign of the repute one enjoys in the eyes of others, as when the poet tells us that Guillaume killed Deramé "par onur" (v. 5) and when Guillaume laments to Guiburc as he returns with the body of Guichart: "Ja mais en tere n'avrai mortel honur" (v. 1314). Honor, the honor of this world, is the goal of this Christian hero.

The importance of honor, honor of this world, acquires its clearest expression when Rainouart is inadvertently left out of the dinner celebrating the victory won at the Larchamp by his prowess. When he realizes his exclusion he gives vehement voice to his bitterness, lamenting that he was born to misfortune: "Si se clamad chaitif, maleüré. / 'Allas, dolent, cum mar fui unques nez! / Cum mar fui fiz al fort rei Deramé" (vv. 3354-56). Throughout the poem he has erupted into unbridled violence only when he feels despised [36]. This conclusion is also true of his last outburst. It is not covetousness that drives him to rage, but the belief that Guillaume holds him in low esteem: "Li quons Guillelmes me tient en tel vilté / Qu'a sun mangier ne me volt apeler" (vv. 3361-62). While Guillaume's motive in seeking to calm him is one of prudence (v. 3397), neither protagonists nor poet suggest that the offended hero's behavior is wrong. Guillaume and Guiburc seek him out and it is the Countess who begs him to forgive the Count (vv. 3460-61). No mention is made of the slaughter of the messenger or messengers and it will be Guiburc herself who honors him by bringing a towel before he dines (v. 3479). It is only at the Countess's prayer that he pardons what he terms Guillaume's wicked felony: "Or vus pardoins la felonie pesme / De cel mangier dunt m'obliad Guillelmes" (vv. 3466-67). There is no suggestion that the dimensions of Rainouart's response are exaggerated, nor that he has over-reacted to the inadvertent slight. Rainouart left Louis's kitchens to improve his status: "Or vient li termes que jo'm voil amender" (v. 2671). Become the knightly hero, his rage erupts when he is not accorded the honor

36. *Le personnage*, pp. 165-66.

that is now his due. Let us not be misled by Rainouart's statement in the closing verses of the poem (vv. 3553-54) that he would have fought harder had he known that Guillaume was his brother-in-law. Rainouart was incensed that his exploits on the battlefield had gone unacknowledged. Had they been even greater he would have only been that much more enraged at being left out of the celebrations. The acquiescence of the Franks in the assuaging of Rainouart's wounded sense of honor is an acknowledgement that his feelings and the expression of those feelings are not inappropriate.

The aim of prowess in battle, more elemental than the prodding of the social conscience to defend the collectivity, more deep-seated than charity which pushes the knight to prefer the interests of another or of the group to his own, is the need to acquire high standing in the eyes of others. We perceive this drive behind noble heroism in the epithets used to describe Vivien, the most sacrificial of the epic's heroes. Sometimes the poet calls him "Viviëns, li ber" (v. 988), but juxtaposed is "Viviën l'alosed" (v. 2483). At the heart of the matter is "los", praise and the desire for this praise.

This "los" is the fame of the pagan classical world. The epics have been interpreted as replacing selfishness by charity and it is a commonplace to point out that epics were accepted on a par with saints' lives as worthy narratives. This view holds good of the *Chanson de Guillaume* to a certain extent, but more prominent in this epic is the drive of self-interest at the heart of the sacrifice of self for society. Particularly is this true of Rainouart and his last outburst of violence. His response to the perceived insult to his honor parallels that of Achilles. While the Greek hero withholds his assistance where the medieval protagonist vents his anger in physical violence, the results of both of their responses are destructive to the societies they inhabit. Achilles' attitude is perhaps representative of a particular point of view. The human life span is short anyway and the warrior accepts that his may be even briefer. From such a perspective honor may seem the greatest good of all. Achilles, destined to have a short life, prayed that he at least should have honor [37]. If the function of medieval epic poetry is to show *fortitudo* tamed by *sapientia* and then *pietas*, as Com-

37. "Since, my mother, you bore me to be a man with a short life, / therefore Zeus of the loud thunders on Olympus should grant me / honor at least", *The Iliad of Homer*, Bk. 1, vv. 352-54.

barieu has suggested, the *Chanson de Guillaume* and in it particularly Rainouart show that the desire for fame and good repute in the eyes of others continues nevertheless to be a motivating force.

The desire for fame as a compelling force is not restricted to Rainouart alone. The binary concepts of the pursuit of honor and the avoidance of shame are apposed to each other in the poem. Shame was not the initiating factor in the tragedy of Vivien. While Tiébaut's cowardice, his shame, is saliently indicated, the quality in him that triggered the tragic action of the poem was his desire for glory. The Saracens so outnumbered the Christians that the presence of Tiébaut and Estourmi and their equally cowardly men would not have turned the tide once Tiébaut's clumsy scouting had revealed the Christian presence to the enemy. This is made clear by the fact that the Saracen forces were so large that Guillaume's successive armies could not defeat them. Tiébaut's fateful act was to refuse in his drunkeness to send for Guillaume; his reason was that with Guillaume present, he, Tiébaut, would lose his own chance for glory:

> "En ceste terre, el regne Loois,
> U que arrivent païen u Arabit,
> Si mandet l'om Guillelme le marchis.
> Si de tes homes i veneient vint mil,
> Vienge Guillelmes, e des suens n'ait que cinc,
> U treis u quatre, que vienge a eschari,
> Tu te combates e vengues Arabiz,
> Si dist hom ço: danz Guillelmes le fist!
> Suens qui que's prenge, tote voie est li pris" (vv. 61-69).

While such an attitude was not sustained the next day and was bad strategy in face of the reality of overwhelming enemy forces, the poem does not condemn such a point of view, but rather reinforces it. We have seen the poet tell us in his introduction that he will narrate how Guillaume killed Deramé on the Larchamp to his glory. However, in the body of the poem it is Gui not Guillaume who does this deed, as we have seen (vv. 1962-63). Yet the poem confers glory on Guillaume for this killing. Similarly, it is Rainouart who achieves the final victory at the Larchamp, although again the poet in his introduction gives all the honor to the Count. Guillaume acquits himself in the fight against Deramé to his honor, but it is through the achievements of those who serve him. Formidable warrior that he is, he yet acquires glory through

the exploits of others. This is precisely what Tiébaut had not wanted, for he complained that no matter what anybody else might do, if Guillaume were present, then Guillaume would get the glory (vv. 61-67).

Given other circumstances we must believe that the poet would not have found him to be wrong, because Rainouart's final outburst of anger, which we have seen accepted by the other protagonists, is essentially a rejection of just such a misattribution of honor. The difference between Tiébaut and Rainouart lies not in different concepts of honor or its pursuit, but in Tiébaut's cowardice. Thus we see that fame, worldly glory for this world's sake, what the *Chanson de Guillaume* poet calls "*mortel honur*" (v. 1314), is accepted as appropriate motivation for heroic conduct in this epic. Christian poem though it is, old pagan values of the classical world are still retained.

The later return to violence on the part of the overlooked Rainouart occupies its rightful place in the plan of the poem. He has within him the pre-Christian driving force that led him from the kitchens of Laon to triumph on the battlefield of the Larchamp: the desire for wordly honor. Warriors wage war to win fame. But the poem also shows the place of this quest for fame in the plan of Divine Providence. We have seen that mention of the "vent mystérieux" which leads Rainouart to his destiny is withheld until the end of the poem, illustrating how God permits free human will while at the same time exploiting, through divine foreknowledge, the choices of that free will to serve his ends [38]. In like fashion we see the desire for glory used providentially by God to fulfill His covenant with Guillaume: "Qui bien le creit ja nen ert confunduz" (v. 2157), while Rainouart's purpose was other. In this way the *Chanson de Guillaume* echoes St. Augustine's premise that God allowed the Roman desire for fame and glory to prosper as a way of accomplishing His divine plan [39].

38. *Le personnage*, p. 169.
39. *De civitate Dei*, Bk. 5, chap. 13.